

The stall audit

Most of what you have started is not moving, and most of it is not moving for one of five reasons. Each reason has one question that settles it. Answer the question for each thing you have not touched in a month, and you will know which ones are waiting on a decision, which ones are waiting on a person, and which ones you have already decided against and not said so.

How to run it

Write down everything you have started and have not touched in a month. Not tasks; things. A side product, a course, a room you meant to set up, a person you meant to write to. Next to each one, write the reason it stopped from the list below, then answer that reason's question in one line. Then choose one of three outcomes: decide the next step, park it with a date, or drop it and keep the reason. Every item gets exactly one.

The point is not to restart all of them. The point is to stop carrying the ones you have already decided against.

The reasons, and the question for each

IT STOPPED BECAUSE	ASK YOURSELF	WHAT USUALLY RESTARTS IT
Waiting on someone	Who, since when, and do they know you are waiting?	A delegation pattern, not a discipline one. Half the time the person does not know. The other half, the same name appears on three things and the fix is a conversation, not a reminder.
Unclear next step	What is the one concrete thing that would move this, however small?	This is the most common reason and the cheapest to fix. Things stop because the next move was never decided, not because there was no time. Decide one step. Not the plan, the step.
Lost interest	If this were finished tomorrow by someone else, would you care?	The most honest reason there is, and the cheapest. If the answer is no, drop it and keep the reason. Dropping something you no longer want is the system working, not failing.

IT STOPPED BECAUSE	ASK YOURSELF	WHAT USUALLY RESTARTS IT
No time	When, exactly, and what would have to give?	"No time" is usually "not chosen". Either name the week it gets its time and park it until then, or admit it is one of the two reasons above wearing a calendar.
Needs money	How much, by when, and what is the cheapest version that needs none?	A number and a date turn this from a feeling into a plan. Park it with the date. If the cheapest version needs no money at all, that is the next step.
Something else	Write the real reason in one sentence.	If it will not fit in a sentence, it is one of the five above and you have not said which. If it does fit, you now have the reason written down, which is the whole audit.

The three outcomes

- **Decide the next step.** One concrete thing, small enough to do this week. Write it down where you will see it.
- **Park it, with a date.** Deliberately stopped, not abandoned. The date is when it comes back to ask the question again. Without a date, parked is dropped with better manners.
- **Drop it, and keep the reason.** Decided against. Keep the sentence you wrote, so the next time the idea comes back you can read why you let it go instead of starting it a third time.

WHERE A THING CAN BE

SIX STAGES, WHICH IS ENOUGH FOR ANYTHING YOU WOULD EVER WRITE ON A CARD. MOST OF WHAT STALLS IS STUCK BETWEEN THE FIRST TWO, NEVER HAVING BECOME A REAL THING, AND THE AUDIT ABOVE IS MOSTLY ABOUT ADMITTING THAT.

STAGE	MEANS
SPARK	A THOUGHT, WRITTEN DOWN SO IT STOPS TAKING UP ROOM IN YOUR HEAD.
SHAPING	WORKING OUT WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS, BEFORE BUILDING ANYTHING.
BUILDING	ACTIVELY BEING MADE.
LIVE	IT EXISTS IN THE WORLD.
PARKED	DELIBERATELY STOPPED, WITH A DATE IT COMES BACK.
DROPPED	DECIDED AGAINST. KEPT SO THE DECISION SURVIVES.

THE SHEET

SIX ROWS TO START WITH. PRINT MORE IF YOU NEED THEM; MOST PEOPLE DO.

THE THING	LAST MOVED	REASON	THE ANSWER, IN ONE LINE	OUTCOME

Running it every week without the sheet

Brassdeck is this audit, kept. Every card carries its stage, its next step and a clock that only moves when something real happens, so a card that has not moved fades on the board and asks the question before the month is gone. Parked cards come back on their date. Dropped cards keep their reason. Free has four cards, which is enough to find out whether the fade tells you something.

Start your board (https://app.brassdeck.com/signup?utm_source=magnet&utm_medium=page&utm_campaign=stall-audit)

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